



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona

DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

OIFA Member Update - October 2023

AHCCCS Abuse and Neglect Prevention Surveys for Members and Families

Members and families, AHCCCS needs your feedback and ideas on how to help prevent the abuse and neglect of vulnerable Arizonans.

Vulnerable adults include Arizonans who are aging, have physical disabilities or have developmental disabilities and their families receiving state services.

AHCCCS has two surveys this year. One is for members, and the other is for family members. All responses are entirely confidential, and your name will not be shared.

This is a follow-up survey to see how Arizona is implementing the recommendations of the State of Arizona's 2019 Abuse and Neglect Prevention Task Force. The Task Force's recommendations looked at prevention across state systems, including the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES), and the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS).

The results of these member and family surveys will be used to help with the second evaluation of the state's progress, conducted by the Sonoran Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, University of Arizona.

Your continued efforts to assist vulnerable Arizonans to have quality lives are appreciated!

[Member Survey](#)

[Family Survey](#)

It's Fall! Get Your Flu and COVID Shots

It's October! And while this month comes with fall, pumpkins, apple cider, and crisp weather, it also comes with flu season.

No one wants their fall holidays to be ruined because of sickness. That's why the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend getting up-to-date on your flu and COVID vaccinations. Medical professionals agree it's perfectly safe to get both vaccines together.

COVID Vaccine Recommendations

The [CDC recommends](#) everyone ages 5 years and older get one dose of the updated 2023-2024 mRNA COVID vaccine. You can get either the Moderna or Pfizer version. Both are authorized in the United States.

Flu Vaccine Recommendations

The [CDC also recommends](#) everyone 6 months and older get a flu vaccine each year. This is

especially important for people at high risk of serious complications from the flu.

Flu and COVID Vaccine Benefits

Vaccines for both flu and COVID can prevent serious illness. This means that although you might not get sick with either virus, if you do, your symptoms will be milder. This is especially important for people at higher risk of serious complications due to other medical conditions. Getting flu and COVID vaccines could save your life.

Talk to your doctor about getting the flu and COVID vaccines this month. Protect your health. Protect yourself.

Do You Have a Natural Disaster Plan?

Arizona is finally moving out of fire season, but other states are now dealing with hurricanes. No matter the time of year, it's always possible a natural disaster may strike.

Do you have a Natural Disaster Plan in place?

The National Council on Severe Autism created something called the [September 26th Project](#). The project is in honor of Chairwoman Maysoon Salah's sister and nephew, who both died in a housefire on September 26, 2020. Her nephew was diagnosed with autism.

The September 26th Project has a number of "checklists" that families can use to prepare for emergencies. One of those checklists is the [Natural Disaster Checklist](#).

It's important to have a Natural Disaster Plan in place. The plan could save your life and the life of your family. If you don't have one, now's the best time to create one.

According to the September 26th Project, here are things you should do to develop your Natural Disaster Plan:

- Keep medical information locked in a fire-safe and flood-safe place. You can also save the documents on your computer.
- Prepare a disaster supply kit. It should include a flashlight, batteries, cash, first aid supplies, and copies of important information.
- Ensure you have enough food, water, blankets, and candles in case you need to stay in your home without electricity.
- Have an emergency contact list or another place to go if you need to evacuate.
- Know where your local shelters are for evacuations.
- Decide on a planned "safe meeting place." This meeting place is where you'll meet up in case you become separated from your loved ones.

For more information on preparing a Natural Disaster Plan, visit the [September 26th Project](#).

Non-Speaking Diagnoses do not Predict Cognitive Level

In May 2023, [Fox10 News in Phoenix](#) reported on a family whose non-speaking teenage boy was assaulted at a pizza restaurant.

The news story said the boy tapped a person on the shoulder to get their attention. He did this because he's a person who does not communicate verbally and has autism. The person allegedly took offense and assaulted the boy. Now, the boy's father is speaking out to help educate the

community about individuals who are non-speaking.

DDD leadership also wants to bring awareness to the public about people who don't communicate using words. In fact, a common misconception is that people who are non-speaking are not smart. That's false, according to DDD Medical Management Medical Director Vicki Copeland, M.D.

"Many people do not communicate verbally," Dr. Copeland said. "For example, people who are born deaf or lose their hearing at a very early age do not communicate verbally, but their cognitive abilities are often within normal range. People often assume that if someone has difficulty expressing themselves through words, that they are dumb or delayed."

A [peer-reviewed article](#) published online by SageJournals showed that in a small portion of its study sample, nonverbal IQ was above the intellectual disability limit. That small portion all belonged to the Youngsters group. The name of the study was, "[Relations between language, non-verbal cognition, and conceptualization in non- or minimally verbal individuals with ASD across the lifespan.](#)"

Communicating with People Who Are Non-Speaking

"We, as a community, need to do better and understand that there are different ways to communicate," Dr. Copeland said. "It should be routine to offer pictures as a way to order food at restaurants. We do this all the time for online shopping, but for some reason, when we are in person, we expect verbal communication."

Here are some other things families, caregivers, and the community can do to communicate better with people who are non-speaking. These tips are from Debra Joseph, a licensed psychologist for DDD:

- Use simple gestures like squeezing a person's hand
- Pay close attention to movements that may be to communicate, like twitches, eye movements, blinking, and finger-tapping
- Look for "instinctive" responses that occur when someone feels pain, surprise, shock, or discomfort
- Learn sign language if the individual is deaf
- Use Post-It notes
- Use other visual cues that work for the families/caregivers and their non-speaking loved ones
- Use low-tech communication boards and make them more widely available
- Use augmentative communication boards and make them more acceptable

Finally, always remember this: If someone doesn't respond, they may not be ignoring you. Instead, they may not hear you, or they may require more time to process the information. Always be patient, understanding, and inclusive.

For World Mental Health Day, Know Your Rights!

October 10, 2023 was [World Mental Health Day](#). It's sponsored every year by the World Health Organization (WHO).

According to the WHO, "World Mental Health Day 2023 is an opportunity for people and communities to unite behind the theme 'Mental health is a universal human right' to improve knowledge, raise awareness and drive actions that promote and protect everyone's mental health as a universal human right."

The WHO calls mental health a basic human right. This includes the right to find quality mental health care, stay protected from mental health risks, and be free and independent in one's community.

Unfortunately, individuals with mental health conditions are more likely to be abused and discriminated against, according to [Mental Health America](#). If you receive services from DDD and have a serious or chronic mental illness, you have a number of [legal rights under federal and state laws](#). Some of those rights include:

1. The right to appropriate mental health services based on your needs
2. The right to participate in all phases of your mental health treatment
3. The right to a discharge plan after leaving a hospital
4. The right to agree to, or refuse, treatment (except in an emergency or by court order)
5. The right to treatment in the least restrictive setting
6. The right to freedom from unnecessary seclusion or restraint
7. The right not to be physically, sexually, or verbally abused
8. The right to privacy
9. The right to file an appeal or grievance when you disagree with the services you receive or your rights are violated
10. The right to choose someone to assist you in meetings and in filing grievances
11. The right to a case manager to work with you in getting the services you need
12. The right to a written Individual Service Plan (ISP) that sets forth the services you will receive
13. The right to associate with others
14. The right to privacy for your psychiatric records
15. The right to obtain copies of your own psychiatric records (unless it would not be in your best interests to have them)
16. The right to appeal a court-ordered "involuntary commitment," and to talk to a lawyer, and to request judicial review of a court-ordered commitment every 60 days
17. The right not to be discriminated against in employment or housing.

SAFETY CORNER

Halloween is Here! How to Stay Safe and Healthy

Nothing says spooky fun like Halloween! Many people love getting dressed up and going trick-or-treating in their neighborhoods. Yet, even in the midst of this fun, it's always smart to be safe. Here are some tips to keep in mind this Halloween:

Eat Candy with Caution

Eating candy and other sweets can be bad for your teeth and overall health. According to the American Dental Association's [Halloween Survival Guide](#):

- Avoid hard and sticky candies. They can cause damage to your teeth, such as cavities.
- Eating too much candy can upset your stomach or raise your blood sugar and blood pressure.
- Remember to brush and floss your teeth after eating sugary snacks.
- Try to eat candy right after a meal, rather than throughout the day.

Stick to Safety

When it comes to picking your Halloween costume, keep these tips in mind:

- Wear reflective tape or bright colors so cars and other people can see you.
- Do not wear a mask that keeps you from seeing properly.
- Test any makeup on a small part of your skin first to make sure it will not irritate you.

When trick or treating, remember to:

- Always go with an adult or friends you trust.
- Plan your route so your parents and friends know where you are going.
- Return home at an agreed-upon time.
- Never go into a stranger's house or car.
- Do not eat candy until you get home and can inspect it for safety.
- Bring a flashlight to light your way.
- Walk on the sidewalk and look both ways for traffic before crossing a street.

With that in mind, have fun and enjoy the holiday. Happy Halloween!

Public Town Hall Meetings

DDD hosts town hall meetings for members, families and providers. You can join via the Internet or by telephone. Attendees can also ask questions. **The next town hall will be held on Thursday, November 2, 2023.** Visit <http://bit.ly/dddtownhall> for details to join.

Community Resources

DDD has information for local, state, and national groups that support members and their families. The DDD website has links to many of these groups that can assist with day to day tasks and other services that may not be covered by the Division. [Visit the community resources section of the DDD website to learn more](#) or the 2-1-1 Directory at <https://211arizona.org>.

Arizona Warm Lines

Trained peer support specialists are available to provide help if you need it. These warm lines are available to all Arizonans ages 18 and older. Peer support specialists have lived experience with behavioral health challenges. They are trained to listen and support you.

Area Covered	Provider	Phone Number	Hours
All Arizona Counties	NAZCARE	1-888-404-5530	4:30pm to 10:30pm Seven days per week
Central Arizona	Crisis Response Network	602-347-1100	24 hours
Southern Arizona - Pima County	Hope, Inc	520-770-9909	8am - 10pm Seven days per week, 365 days per year, holidays open 8am - 6pm

Area Covered	Provider	Phone Number	Hours
Southern Arizona - All Other Counties	Hope, Inc	1-844-733-9912	8am - 10pm Seven days per week, 365 days per year, holidays open 8am - 6pm

The Family Involvement Center offers a warm line for family members. They offer support to family members that deal with behavioral health challenges. This service is also available at no cost.

- Statewide phone number: 1-877-568-8468
- Hours: Monday - Friday: 8:30am - 5:00pm

Crisis Services

If you, a family member, or a friend have a mental health emergency, seek help right away. Trained crisis staff are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to help via phone, text, or chat. The crisis lines are at no cost, confidential and open to anyone who needs help. For medical, police and fire emergency situations, always call 911.

National 24-Hour Crisis Hotlines

Phone

- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: 988
- National Substance Use and Disorder Issues Referral and Treatment Hotline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Text

- Text the word "HOME" to 741741
- Send a text to 988

Chat

- Chat link for 988: <https://988lifeline.org/chat>

Videophone

- Visit the [988 website](#) and look towards the bottom of the page where it states "ASL NOW."

For TTY Users

- Use your preferred relay service or dial 711 then 988

For those who are Deaf, hard of hearing, DeafBlind, and late-deafened, and their families

- Contact DeafLEAD, which provides 24-hour videophone access to crisis interpreters and crisis intervention services
 - Voice Phone: (573) 445-5005
 - Video Phone: (573) 303-5604
 - Text: HAND to 839863

Arizona Statewide Crisis Hotline

- Phone: 1-844-534-4673 (HOPE)

- Text: 4HOPE (44673)
- Chat: [Chat with a Crisis Specialist](#)

Suicide and Crisis Hotlines by County

- Apache County: Arizona Complete Health - Complete Care Plan, 1-866-495-6735
- Cochise County: Arizona Complete Health - Complete Care Plan, 1-866-495-6735
- Coconino County: Care1st, 1-877-756-4090
- Gila County: Mercy Care, 1-800-631-1314
- Graham County: Arizona Complete Health - Complete Care Plan, 1-866-495-6735
- Greenlee County: Arizona Complete Health - Complete Care Plan, 1-866-495-6735
- La Paz County: Arizona Complete Health - Complete Care Plan, 1-866-495-6735
- Navajo County: Care1st, 1-877-756-4090
- Maricopa County: Mercy Care, 1-800-631-1314
- Mohave: Care1st, 1-877-756-4090
- Pima County: Arizona Complete Health - Complete Care Plan, 1-866-495-6735
- Pinal County: Mercy Care, 1-866-495-6735
- Santa Cruz County: Arizona Complete Health - Complete Care Plan, 1-866-495-6735
- Yuma County: Arizona Complete Health - Complete Care Plan, 1-866-495-6735
- Yavapai County: Care1st, 1-877-756-4090
- Ak-Chin Indian Community: 1-800-259-3449
- Gila River Indian Community: 1-800-259-3449
- Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community: 1-855-331-6432
- Tohono O'odham Nation: 1-844-423-8759

Especially for Teens

- Teen Life Line phone or text: 602-248-TEEN (8336)

Especially for Veterans

Veterans Crisis Line: 988 (press 1)

Be Connected: 1-866-4AZ-VETS (429-8387)

Report Fraud, Waste or Abuse

Medicaid fraud, waste and abuse (FWA) are crimes. Report fraud, waste, and abuse right away. You will not get in trouble or lose services if you report any suspected fraud, waste, or abuse.

You can report FWA to DDD by:

- Calling DDD at 1-877-822-5799
- Sending an email to dddfwa@azdes.gov
- Sending a letter to DES/DDD, Attn: Corporate Compliance Unit, 1789 W Jefferson St., Mail Drop 2HA1, Phoenix, AZ 85007
- Completing this [online form](#).

You can also report FWA to AHCCCS

- AHCCCS online reporting form for FWA: <https://www.azahcccs.gov/Fraud/ReportFraud/onlineform.aspx>

- Provider Fraud
 - In Arizona: 602-417-4045
 - Outside Arizona: 1-888-ITS-NOT-OK (1-888-487-6686)
- Report Member Fraud:
 - In Arizona: 602-417-4193
 - Outside Arizona: 1-888-ITS-NOT-OK (1-888-487-6686)
- If you have questions about AHCCCS fraud, abuse of the program, or abuse of a member, email the AHCCCS Office of Inspector General (OIG) at AHCCCSFraud@azahcccs.gov.

Stay Up to Date

Previous versions of OIFA newsletters are available to view on DDD's website. Visit the [Member Services](#) page and click on the "Member Newsletters" section.

DDD is Here to Help

Please contact your Support Coordinator or the DDD Customer Service Center at 1-844-770-9500 ext. 1 (TTY/TDD 711) if you have questions.

Call the DDD Customer Service Center at 1-844-770-9500 ext. 1, TTY/TDD 711, to ask for this material in other formats. Language help is available at no cost to you.